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## Desert Dawn

James Vink

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## Desert Dawn

The desert dawn is quick to light,  
And slow to heat, the circumambient ground.  
It floods past buttes and mesas (sight  
Unseen by the dark surround)

Until it floods with a surreal light  
Of ochres and dark greens, the gushing wound  
Opening in rifts between each mound  
And mesa waking. Now the sound

Of wakening birds and insects might  
Announce that dawn has drowned  
The eastern ridges, to any found  
On the western ones. The feathery flight

Of hawks for prey, their swoop profound,  
Tells some, too late, of the demise of night.  
The desert dawn unfolds to human might  
A godlike canvas, high-lying on a ground

Where tufts of silvery sagebrush spidery white  
On neon blue the face of Nature drowned  
With premature aging beard, while desert-varnish quite  
Exposed the rifts in colored chalk-cliffs ground

On Vulcan's anvil by the darkness browned.  
Flotillas of cloud patrol around  
For the last time in dark, the first in light,  
Signalling to far mountains found

Again, each rude outcome of night  
As Dawn from bed arises quite ungowned.  
Yesterday's sunset over this same ground  
Dripped so bloodily, every cave was drowned

In oranges, purples, violets rewound  
From the great spool of departing night——  
All seen now in a subdued, retrospective light  
Preparing the new day for the new fight.

*James Vink*

ILLUSTRATION BY KRISTA LAMB

